



**THE OFF SCHOOL GROUNDS
COALITION INC.**

OUR VISION

Our vision is to promote the ethical application of both school and community leadership practices for the betterment of human welfare. We are committed to providing community stakeholders, business leaders, and community leaders with accurate, research-based information about a variety of educational and community-based topics, including eradicating the school to prison pipeline, increasing youth workforce and career readiness, decreasing juvenile recidivism rates, and securing other wrap around services that protect our communities most vulnerable members.

Off School Grounds is committed to providing community stakeholders, business leaders, and community leaders with accurate, research-based information about a variety of educational and community-based topics, including eradicating the school to prison pipeline, increasing youth workforce and career readiness, decreasing juvenile recidivism rates, and securing other wrap around services that protect our communities most vulnerable members affected by drug trafficking and poverty. Our vision is in alignment with HIDTA mission to reduce drug trafficking and misuse by improving interagency collaboration, promoting accurate and timely information and intelligence sharing, and providing specialized training and other resources to its law enforcement, intelligence, treatment, and prevention initiatives.

Funds will be used to fund the Off School Grounds Community Center and after school program that will provide targeted support for communities affected by drug trafficking and gun violence. The OSG Community Initiative will address community needs to advance education, technology, food security, mental health and financial wellness through remedial education activities and academic enrichment learning, cultural programs, literacy education programs, technology education programs, programs that support healthy and active lifestyles, parenting skills programs that promote parental involvement and family literacy, and drug and violence prevention programs.

Specifically the goal is to provide:

- schools with a sustainable after school program to improve academic performance, promote positive social skills, provide access to enrichment activities (i.e. the arts, sports, music, theater, robotics, science and engineering), educate students about their communities and provide resources that will advance their skills to be productive citizens despite community failures.
- provide supplies, meal boxes, and backpack programs to ease the burden on school communities and families
- work in partnership with mental health professionals to provide a sustainable mental health curriculum
- provide financial education to eradicate the generational misconceptions with spending and developing better financial habits.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Off School Grounds was launched in April 2020, by Dennis B. McKesey, an experienced educator, leader and executive coach that has trained scores of school leaders throughout the country through his unique style of leadership development. In light of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the need to create a virtual platform to support, mentor and coach school leaders was undoubtedly essential. Off School Grounds provides such opportunity in conjunction with creating a “safe space” for school leaders to network and share best practices for their continued growth and development.

This virtual platform also fosters the development of innovative leadership practices that allows school leaders to exchange ideas and advance educational opportunities for students of color. The weekly discussions cover a wide array of education and leadership domains that include; visionary and strategic leadership, effective professional and ethical practices, remote leading and learning as well as other essential leadership practices that are crucial for increased student achievement.

Off School Grounds is committed to combatting the educational inequities of marginalized students in urban communities by challenging school principals to be change agents and advocates for children. The coalition supports the premise that it is a nationwide responsibility to minimize the achievement gap for underserved children that reside in this country’s poorest communities. Off School Grounds was intended to be a beacon for school leaders during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The platform continues to amplify national dialogue among school leaders to provide greater opportunities for students of color thereafter.



FOUNDER & BOARD CHAIRMAN

DR. DENNIS B. MCKESEY

Dr. Dennis B. McKesey is the Founder and CEO of In Our Best Interest LLC and The Off School Grounds Coalition, Inc. He is a dedicated, innovative and resourceful education professional with close to thirty (30) years of experience in working for private, public and charter schools in New York City. It is his belief that with the support of Educators' and their passion to learn and grow, we can enhance capacity to facilitate students' learning, mental and social emotional growth, all of which leads toward urban school reform and community development.

As an Alma Mater of Mercy College with accreditations in School Administration and Supervision, a graduate of Columbia University Graduate School of Business Leadership Development Program, and having successfully completed his Educational Doctorate at the University of New England, he remains passionate for the direct involvement of community and education through effective school leadership.

Dennis consults nationally with teachers and administrators at schools and districts and has presented at school leadership conferences. As a former principal at one of the most premier charter schools in the country, he built a proven track record of success and desired to share his effective and beneficial strategies with other educators in the area and across the nation.



THE TEAM

DENEISE TAYLOR MCKESEY

Chief Operating Officer & Co-Chairman

Deneise leverages over fifteen years of experience in Retail and Investment Banking as well as ten years in the Mortgage Industry. With her astute acumen of how financial institutions evaluate applicants, she is one of the best in her business. She graduated Summa Cum Laude at Iona College where she received her Bachelors of Business Administration and MBA with a concentration in Financial Management.



Deneise McKesey is the CEO and founder of Focused Solutions Services, Inc., a business consulting and personal finance literacy firm. She believes financial literacy is one of the essential aspects that everyone should possess, especially in today's fast-paced economy. Her goal is to create sustainable financial resilience. Beyond business and personal finance consulting, she emphasizes building financial literacy among her clients to enjoy the benefits of achieving long and short-term financial goals.



LAWRENCE "LAZE" ELLIOTT

With 35 years in the entertainment industry, Laze is a businessman known as a pioneering icon in the Hip Hop and R&B world and also in the international touring world. Laze Elliott began his broadcasting and global media career in 1990 serving as Music Producer, Production Manager and Creative Director to world renowned artists. Laze has produced music legends Billy Danze & Lil' Fame (aka M.O.P.), Jay-Z, Positive K, Big Daddy Kane, Busta Rhymes, Nice n' Smooth, Vanilla Ice, Buju Banton, Lil Jon and the list continues. Taylos Media, LLP serves as a platform to advance children in 21st century with new technology in Media Production. As technology advances in the music industry, Laze brings his unique expertise of the behind the scenes knowledge in production, sound waves, music frequency and creative audio-visual effects. His most notable NYC studio projects consist of the reimagining of Sony Music Studio, redesign of D&D Studios from an analog to all-digital room as well as the Hammerstein Ballroom studio and lounge in NYC, Unique Studios, Quad Studio and Pyramid Studios.



THE TEAM

PRISCILLA ECHI

Priscilla is an Entrepreneur, Award winning Journalist, Activist & Community Organizer who consults Executive and Political Clients. Priscilla also has a proven track record coaching entertainment industry A-Listers. A creative visionary, and author (2021) not just passionate about work, but deeply involved in community affairs with internationally renowned activist.



Currently, Ms. Echi serves as Board Chair for M.A.D.E. Transitional Services. The Steven Tyler "Dream On" Project creator has consistently contributed to the Non Profit arena for over 15 years, executing programs at signature events, while securing sponsorships from high end brands including but not limited to: Chase, American Express, Mercedes Benz, Hennessy, Sam Ash, Ruth Chris, and Neiman Marcus.

This experience has given her distinctive vision and deep appreciation for how excellent communication through media relations, top notch events, and non-profit work when managed well, can improve the quality of life in our region, one program and city at a time.

Armani is an accomplished attorney and a creative mind who has successfully merged his love for the law and for the world of innovative thought into a career that positively impacts both. He is the founder of the Law Office of Armani B. Scott in Brooklyn, New York. He also serves as Business Counsel and Executive Producer for Strategy Park Management. Mr. Scott believes in the power of helping others to solve problems and manifest their visions. It is with this higher purpose that he provides his signature services which cover all aspects of law, business development, art curation, brand development, and creative writing. With over 20 years of legal experience, Mr. Scott is a member of the New York State Bar and the United States Federal Court. He is skilled in corporate and entertainment law, including intellectual property protection and copyright and trademark procurement. Mr. Scott has provided business counsel, art curation, and art development for exhibits, murals, and multimedia campaigns on behalf of clients including Smif-N-Wessun, Roc Nation, Pepsi, Champion Sportswear, Bronx Brewery, the Bronx Zoo, and the New York Yankees.



ARMANI B. SCOTT, ESQ.



THE TEAM

STEVE MANION

Steve is a dynamic sales professional having served in a variety of sales leadership roles at TransUnion. He has 20+ years experience servicing the financial services and related industries, is well versed in financial service consumer products and brings a passion for promoting financial literacy and financial inclusion across all communities.

Steve attended Colorado College, Boston University and has BS Business Management from Lesley College.



KEN MILLER

Ken is the Founder and Executive Director of Intellectus Preparatory Charter School located in Mount Vernon, New York. With investments from B-16, Ken has had success in early childhood education, elementary, middle and high school levels, as well as in professorship at the college level. Ken was most recently an instructional coach at Merrick Academy Queens Public Charter School, where she contributed as a school turnaround specialist, leader, and teacher coach. She has spent 13 years working in the field of organizational development and school improvement, including serving as the director of STEM, data, and assessment at Invictus Preparatory and dean at Achievement First.



Ken earned a B.S. degree in Mathematics and Adolescent education from CUNY's College of Staten Island. Ken graduated Magna Cum Laude with a M.S. degree in Organizational Leadership (a non-profit MBA) and a M.S. degree in School Building Leadership from Mercy College. Most recently, Ken graduated with a 4.0 and earned a Certificate of Advanced Studies from Niagara University in School District Leadership. Ken holds New York State certifications in teaching Birth through 2nd grade and mathematics for grades 7-12 and administrative certifications as a principal and superintendent.





WHAT WE DO?

OSG is registered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created to support, mentor and coach school leaders through the exchange of ideas with the goal of advancing educational, career and life opportunities for students of color. It was launched in 2020 by Dr. Dennis McKesey to serve as a safe haven for OSG members and participants to network and share best practices for their continued growth and development.

The five pillars of OSG based off the requests of our Principal network and the imminent need of their school communities are:

- Leadership Development
- Education Technology (EdTech)
- Physical and Mental Health
- Food Insecurities
- Financial Literacy



OSG PILLARS



Leadership Development

OSG is committed to strong school leadership by promoting critical friend groups, peer to peer intervisitation, collaborative team school visits, and group/individual coaching sessions to produce greater results for students and their communities.



Education Technology (EdTech)

OSG is committed to creating a new technology era in which all students have equal access to the future. We are building career pathways in the technological industry that builds the skills for students to have a better onramp to the technology industry after high school.



Physical & Mental Health

OSG is committed to working with district and school-based leaders to provide an additional layer of support as they continue to face challenges in supporting mental health and the social emotional needs in their schools.



Food Insecurities

OSG is committed to eliminating these disparities by working with schools and community organizations to provide supplies, meal boxes, community volunteers, and financial assistance to school communities in need.



Financial Literacy

OSG is committed to providing resources to support our underserved communities by eradicating the generational misconceptions and inherited behavioral psychology associated with spending by developing better habits.



OSG PILLARS

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

OSG provides targeted support and a safe space for leaders to explore controversial issues. Our work is inclusive of collective efficacy and collaborative partnership of Principals, Assistant Principals, Teachers and aspiring leaders. Our challenge is to engage stakeholders in intellectual discourse to explore solutions. We hold one another accountable for teacher development, student achievement, and a positive culture and climate. Research has shown that strong school leadership produces greater results for students and their communities. OSG works to promote critical friend groups, peer to peer intervisitation, collaborative team school visits, and group/individual coaching sessions. We have grown from a small cadre of like-minded individuals to a collective movement across several states, and countries.



EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Marginalized communities including people of color, low-income individuals, English-language learners, people with disabilities, and populations experiencing homelessness are among those most likely to lack equitable access to technology. There is a well-known achievement gap between the socioeconomic classes in education, and technology. OSG is committed to creating a new technology era in which all students have equal access to the future. We are building career pathways in the technological industry that builds the skills for students to have a better onramp to the technology industry after high school. The pathway to a better world is through education. Our initiative will be providing our youth with technological solutions for the future of work and learning. Additionally, OSG's goal is to increase access to 21st century technology by creating multi-media spaces in schools where students can hone their public speaking talents while producing school news programs and broadcasting live in state-of-the-art broadcasting studios.



OSG PILLARS

FOOD INSECURITIES

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges to schools and families particularly in urban school communities. Ensuring access to food during these critical times is of paramount importance to meeting the public health needs of vulnerable populations at greatest risk for food insecurity. OSG is committed to eliminating these disparities by working with schools and community organizations to provide supplies, meal boxes, community volunteers, and financial assistance to school communities in need. Initiatives such as summer meal programs, backpack programs and food pantries have been key strategies to ease the burden on school communities and their families.



PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH

According to the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 1 in 5 children living in the United States experience a mental disorder every year. School-based mental health is becoming a vital part of student and adult support systems. Studies have shown that mentally healthy students are more likely to go to school ready to learn, actively engage in school activities. Research also indicates that children should have supportive and caring connections with their peers and adults. As school leaders continue to face challenges in supporting mental health and the social emotional needs in their schools, OSG has committed to working with district and school-based leaders to provide an additional layer of support. We have immersed ourselves in developing partnership, creating training and implementing comprehensive school-based mental health services as well as our continued engagement in the planning and implementation of services through the development of a school mental health curriculum.



OSG PILLARS

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Financial literacy is essential for making informed decisions and accessing better opportunities in life. A lack of financial education has led to Americans having inadequate household and retirement savings and high levels of credit card and student loan debt. However, closing the wealth gap isn't an easy fix. Many money problems Americans face can be avoided if financial literacy was taught earlier in school. So why isn't this a part of the early grade school curriculum? OSG is committed to providing resources to support our underserved communities by eradicating the generational misconceptions and inherited behavioral psychology associated with spending by developing better habits. OSG has established partnerships with organizations to provide financial education for adults and youth. These partnerships foster improved educational experiences in schools through personal finance.



IMPACT = EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES



BY THE NUMBERS

The impact of connecting with other organizations and all rooting for one another is clear. When people are put ahead of profits, the benefits can be seen and appreciated at all levels in the schools and community.

300+
MEMBERS



8+
STATES
—
2+
COUNTRIES



14K+
STUDENTS



WHAT WE HAVE DONE

October 2020 – Sponsored the building of the Macooba Childcare Centre **OSG Mini-Basketball Court** in Arusha, Tanzania.

November 2020 – Beyond Meat, Inc. partnered with OSG to donate 452 cases of Beyond Meat (5,424 pounds of product) for the **Newark NJ Southward Thanksgiving Turkey & Coat Giveaway**.

November 2021 – OSG partnered with Think Watts Foundation, Food Bank of NYC, MoCaFi and Earn Your Leisure in preparing and distributing 250 bags of fresh produce, turkeys and other non-perishable items for the **Coast-to-Coast Food Drive** in Dyckman Basketball Park, NY.

December 2021 – **The OSG 1st Annual Toy Drive** collected over 100 toys and 12 kindles; donated 105 gift cards valuing \$5500 to Providence House, a 501(c)(3) non-profit transitional housing for homeless women and children in Brooklyn, NY.

March 2022 – Donated \$1,000 to the **King Fights Cancer Foundation**, a 501(c)(3) non-profit foundation dedicated to helping families whose child is diagnosed with cancer or a life-threatening illness.

March 2022 – OSG members joined the principal and key staff of Research and Service High School, Food Bank of NYC & Think Watts Foundation in serving the community of Bedford Stuyvesant Brooklyn, NY with over 300 lbs. of fresh produce and pantry items during the **Above & Beyond Food Drive**.


June 2022 – The inaugural **OSG Golf Classic** held at Pelham Bay Split Rock Golf Club, Bronx, NY brought together golfers and spectators for a day of fun and giving. Over \$16,000 was donated to continue OSG's mission of giving back to the community through food and toy drives, education seminars and other events.

November 2022– OSG's **2nd Annual Toy Drive** raised \$10,000 in donations used to brighten the holiday season for hundreds of deserving children across NYC. The event's success is attributed to the contributions of our supporters and the generous support from Brothers Empowered to Teach (BE2T), nonprofit organization in New Orleans, Louisiana.





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